

## THE INFLUENCE OF GRAMMATICAL PRACTICE TOWARD STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY

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### Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi pengaruh dari kemampuan tatabahasa terhadap kemampuan menulis siswa, dan kontribusi tatabahasa terhadap setiap aspek menulis. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif. Subyek dalam penelitian ini sebanyak 30 siswa pada tahun pertama di SMAN 1 Ambarawa. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah *grammatical mastery test* dan *writing test*. Disain penelitian adalah *ex post facto design*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai korelasi antara kedua variable adalah 0,617 dan nilai pengaruhnya adalah 0,38. Lebih jauh, ditemukan data bahwa tatabahasa berkontribusi 26,4% terhadap kosa kata, 18,3% terhadap susunan dan 42,8% terhadap aspek tatabahasa menulis. Berdasarkan pada hasil, dapat disimpulkan bahwa ada pengaruh antara latihan tatabahasa dan kemampuan menulis siswa serta aspek menulis yang paling terpengaruh adalah tatabahasa.

The objectives of this research were to investigate the influence of grammatical practice toward students' writing ability and to find out the contribution of grammatical practice to each aspect of writing. This was quantitative research. The subject consisted of thirty students of the first grade at SMAN 1 Ambarawa. The data collecting technique used were grammatical mastery test and writing test. The design that was used was *ex post facto design*. The result of this research showed that the coefficient correlation was 0.617 and the coefficient influences value of X toward Y was 0.380. Furthermore, it was found that grammatical practice gave influence 26.4% toward vocabulary, 18.3% toward organization, and 42.8% toward grammar aspect. Based on the result, it can be concluded that grammatical practice influences students' writing ability, and the most influenced writing aspect is grammar aspect.

**Keywords:** grammatical practice, writing ability, the influence.

## INTRODUCTION

English as a foreign language in Indonesia is taught at senior high school as a compulsory subject. The students in senior high school are hoped to master English to have good English ability in communication. By having good communication, the students are expected to be able to access knowledge by using English (Depdiknas, 2006). That is why, the goal of teaching English as foreign language is to make the students are able to communicate in target language, both in spoken or written forms.

Spoken forms normally relates to verbal utterances. While written forms relates to the composition of written words. They are combined to communicate, share or express the writer's ideas. In addition, Raimes (1983:76) says that writing is a skill in which we express ideas, feelings and thoughts which are arranged in words, sentences and paragraph using eyes, brain and hands. Unfortunately, some students may have difficulties in their writing because they do not know what they will write. They do not have sufficient knowledge in vocabulary, grammar, and organization. In short, it is clear that writing is the most difficult skill to be achieved.

In writing, specifically, grammar is very important aspect in delivering the ideas. Grammar is the basic elements of knowledge or skill, or it is a set of prescriptive notions about correct use of a language. In relation to this, Murcia (1995:4) says that grammar is essentially about the systems and patterns we use to select and combine words. By studying grammar, we come to recognize the structure and

regularity which is the foundation of language and we gain the tools to talk about the language system. Grammar must be learned by the students who want to learn about language. It will be more effective to produce utterance based on the basic structure which they know (Nichols, 1993:78).

Based on the explanation above, the researcher conducted the research to describe the influence of grammatical practice toward students writing ability at SMA Negeri 1 Ambarawa. Besides, the researcher wanted to find how much the grammatical practice contributes students' descriptive writing ability in terms of organization, language structure and vocabulary.

## **METHOD**

Descriptive quantitative was implemented in this research. The design used in this research was *ex post facto design*. Hatch and Farhady (1982:26) state that *ex post facto* design is often used when the researcher does not have control over the selection and manipulation of the independent variable. The subject of this research was the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Ambarawa in even semester of 2014/2015 academic year.

The data were collected by using the instruments, i.e. grammatical mastery test and writing test. To find the coefficient of relationship between two variables, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment Correlation, while for analyzing how far the grammatical practice contributes students' writing ability, Simple Regression Technique was applied. After finding the coefficient relationship, the researcher

finds out the criterion of the hypothesis acceptance. There were two hypothesis,  $H_1$  ( $r_{\text{value}} > r_{\text{table}}$ ), and  $H_0$  ( $r_{\text{value}} < r_{\text{table}}$ )

## RESULT

The result of grammatical practice score was good enough. It was obtained that the highest score is 83.33, and the lowest score is 53.33 and the average score is 67.56. For the writing test, there are 3 students (10 %) got 80 – 89, 17 students (56.67%) got 70 – 79, 9 students (30%) got 60 – 69 and 1 student (3.33%) got <60.

From the calculation of Pearson Product Moment Correlation, the researcher found that the coefficient correlation between students' grammatical practice and their writing ability was 0.617 at significance level of 0.01 which is categorized as weak positive correlation. Besides, the coefficient influences value of grammatical practice toward writing ability was 0.38. For each aspect of writing, grammatical practice gave influence 0.514 toward vocabulary, 0.428 toward organization, and 0.655 toward grammar aspect.

For the hypothesis, the coefficient correlation is higher than critical value of  $r_{\text{table}}$  ( $0.617 > 0.3610$ ). Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

## DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher used score of post test to find out the correlation between two variables; grammatical practices and writing ability. The score of pre test was used in order to prove the hypothesis and analyze the contribution of grammatical practice toward students' writing ability in descriptive text. The result can be seen on the table below:

Table 1 grammatical mastery score

Score interval	Number of students	percentage
$\geq 80$	2	6%
70-79	13	43%
60-69	11	36%
$< 60$	4	13%

From the result of grammatical practice score, it is obtained that the highest score is 83.33, the lowest score is 53.33 and the average is 67.56. By looking at the students' grammatical practice score, it can be claimed that the students had different ability in grammar. The data shows two students got score more or equal than 80, 13 students got score in the range of 70 – 79, 11 students got score in the range of 60 – 69, and 4 students got the score under 60. Based on the result of grammatical practice test, most of the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Ambarawa were considered having average grammatical practice ability.

For another test, that was writing descriptive test, the researcher found that students in first year at SMA Negeri 1 Ambarawa had an average writing ability. According to the result of post test writing descriptive test, the results were none who got 90-100 (0%), 3 students got 80-89 (10%), 17 students got 70-79

(56.67%), 9 students got 60-69 (30%), and 1 student got score under 60 (3.33%).

The average score was 68.46 and it was included to average ability. That can be seen on the table below:

Table 2 The Percentage of Students' Writing Ability

No	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage
1	90 – 100	0	0 %
2	80 – 89	3	10%
3	70 – 79	17	56.67 %
4	60 – 69	9	30%
5	<60	1	3.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100 %</b>

In this research, the writer found that there was correlation between students' grammatical practice and their writing descriptive text ability of first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Ambarawa. Based on the information of gramatical practice and witing test result, it could be concluded that grammatical practice affects students' writing descriptive text ability. The same result was shown when the researcher counted the coefficient correlation for those variables. It is found that coefficient correlation is 0.617 which is categorized as weak positive correlation. The following table shows the coefficient correlation:

Table 3 the correlation between grammatical mastery and writing

Correlations			
		grammar	writing
Grammar	Pearson Correlation	1	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
Writing	Pearson Correlation	.617**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When the students lack of grammatical practice, it may open the possibility for the students to get the difficulties in writing descriptive text. That happens because grammar is one of the important aspects in writing. Nichols (1993) says it will be more effective to produce utterance based on the basic structure which they know. What Nichols said can prove that students have to understand grammar first if they want to write the good sentences in correct structure.

That is also proved when the researcher calculated for the contribution value that showed students' grammatical practice contributes 38% to the students' writing descriptive text. As proposed by Badudu (in Susanto 1997:1), he says that even though students have learned English in years, they still find difficulties to express the ideas in proper words and sentences. This stands to reason because writing skill is the most complex language skill to master because it involved knowledge of sentence structure, diction, organization, ideas, etc (Haris, 1979).

The result of regression can be seen on the table below:

Table 4 regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.617 <sup>a</sup>	.380	.358	5.07225

a. Predictors: (Constant), grammar

Based on that statement, it can be concluded that a good writing descriptive text ability of the students was contributed 38% by grammatical practice ability and another 62% was influenced by other factors.

The correlation and the contribution of students' grammatical practice to their writing descriptive text ability was shown when the students got high score in grammatical practice test, they also got high score for their writing ability. For example the student number 20, the student' grammatical practice score was 80, and the score of writing descriptive text was 83. It can be seen that by having high ability in grammatical practice, students were able to write a paragraph in writing descriptive test better than those who were not have high grammatical practice ability.

On the contrary, the students who were considered having low grammatical practice ability, they also got low score for writing descriptive test. For example student number 11, the grammatical practice score was 56.67 and for writing descriptive test the student got 63. It can be inferred that the students who had low grammatical practice ability were not able to write good paragraph because they did not understand how to write sentences in the good structure.

Even so, there was a student number 13 who had average grammatical practice score (70), but the student's writing score was 57. This could happen because of other factors, maybe the student had average grammatical practice ability but for other factors such as vocabulary, the student was not really good.

To get the further information, the researcher looked at the correlation between each aspect of writing and students' score of grammar test. The result shows that



each aspect of writing has correlation with grammar at significance level of 0.01.

That can be seen on the tables below:

Table 5 the contribution of grammatical mastery toward vocabulary aspect

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.514 <sup>a</sup>	.264	.238	.85582

a. Predictors: (Constant), grammar

Table 6 the contribution of grammatical mastery toward organization aspect.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.428 <sup>a</sup>	.183	.154	1.27803

a. Predictors: (Constant), grammar

Table 7 the contribution of grammatical mastery toward grammar aspect

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.655 <sup>a</sup>	.428	.408	3.15818

a. Predictors: (Constant), grammar

The first aspect in writing test is vocabulary. The coefficient correlation between students' grammatical practice and vocabulary is 0.514. It shows learning grammar will give impact to size of vocabulary. The coefficient influence value is 0.364 means that it contributes 36.4%. In this case, the students who have good ability in simple present tense understand many vocabularies which are used to express the daily activities. By learning simple present tense, the students have the knowledge about verb which is used in expressing habitual action. That's why

students can have good vocabulary in writing if they have good ability in grammar.

The second aspect is organization. By looking at the data, the coefficient correlation between students' grammatical practice and organization is 0.428. while the coefficient influence value is 0.183, so that it give influence 18.3% to organization. Organization is one of the aspects in writing test on how the students understand the coherence and clear in delivering the ideas. In learning simple present tense, the students learn how to tell about something in good pattern and have good meaning. Students who have good understanding in simple present tense will be able to express the ideas in the good order because they know the utterance which is used.

The last aspect of writing test which was used in this research was grammar. The result shows that the coefficient correlation between grammatical practice and grammar is 0.655. The coefficient influence value is 0.428, it means that grammatical mastery contribute 42.8% to grammar aspect in writing ability. Logically, students who have good understanding in simple present tense will write the good sentences which have good grammar in writing. The students will implement their understanding about grammar in their paragraph.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the data analysis and discussions, the researcher gets some conclusion that there is an influence between students' grammatical practices and students'

writing ability. That was shown by the result of r-value (0.617) > r-table (0.361). For the contribution value, it was found that the coefficient influences value is 0.380 at the significant level 0.01. That means that the students' grammatical practices contribute 38 % to their writing ability. Grammatical practice gives different portion of impact to each aspect of writing; vocabulary, organization and grammar. The result shows the aspect of writing that get the most influence from grammatical practice is grammar.

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